

**“Water-Efficient Products Labeling Program”
Stakeholder Meeting: Urban Landscape Irrigation Products
Wyndham Hotel
Phoenix, AZ
February 17, 2004**

**Opening Remarks by James A. Hanlon
Director, Office of Wastewater Management
United States Environmental Protection Agency**

Welcome

Good morning everyone. I'd like to welcome you to our third stakeholder meeting to explore labeling and other market enhancement options for water-efficient landscape irrigation products. We are very interested in this aspect of water efficiency. We're also very encouraged to see such a large and diverse group of people interested in water efficiency and landscape irrigation. And we are eager to hear what you have to say about the opportunities and challenges in front of us.

Why Is Water Efficiency Important?

Clean and safe water is one of our nation's top priorities, and how efficiently we use water, will affect the sustainability of our water infrastructure and water supplies. Our water-efficient product labeling program, or Water Star, is one of the actions we are taking to enhance our efforts to promote water efficiency, which includes managing water demand, preventing water losses, reducing wastewater flows, and reusing treated wastewater. Other actions we

have taken include issuing a policy to make it easier for apartments and other multi-unit buildings to submeter and individually bill their tenants, thereby sending a price signal to encourage conservation. We have also clarified our State Revolving Fund loan eligibility for water-efficiency measures, and we continue to publish manuals, reports, and other documents on the subject. A major update of the Guidelines for Water Reuse that we published in 1992 is due out in the near future.

Enhancing the Market for Water-efficient Products

Stated simply, implementing Water Star will increase water efficiency by:

- helping consumers identify and understand the many advantages of water-efficient products for residential or commercial use,
- motivating manufacturers to produce more competitive water-efficient products, and
- encouraging and helping distributors, retailers, water and wastewater utilities, and local and state governments to promote these products.

The program will be voluntary and work on a partnership basis with the various stakeholders.

The types of products the Agency will evaluate include those for residential and nonresidential use: plumbing products, appliances, landscape irrigation devices, cooling equipment, commercial kitchen and laundry equipment and so on.

We will look at water savings, performance, and market considerations. But our interest today is landscape irrigation products. Based on their research, The Irrigation Association believes there is strong potential to save significant amounts of water through market enhancement activities for water-efficient landscape irrigation products.

While we have a keen interest in product labeling, we also plan to investigate other opportunities, such as voluntary standards, sector-based outreach, and design competitions. We also need to make sure our efforts would clearly increase benefits from activities already under way, such as the Energy Star program, and national plumbing product and appliance standards. We will coordinate our program with Energy Star and other voluntary programs, capitalizing on any synergies we may find, but being careful to avoid any negative effects our activities may have on others, and that certainly includes the landscape irrigation industry.

Water Star is in the beginning stages, and we have a lot of market research and stakeholder interaction ahead of us to determine which approaches are most suitable for various technologies. We will make no decisions about products or approaches until we complete our analytical work. Here are the steps we are working on now:

- We are in the process of procuring consultant services to provide support for further analysis of products, characterization of markets, development of a product selection process, and evaluation of program approaches and frameworks. Before any decisions are made on key aspects of the program, we will seek stakeholder input.
- We are hiring additional full-time staff for the project.
- We will hold one additional stakeholder meeting and then assess the need for additional meetings and other mechanisms for stakeholder involvement. The next meeting will be in Seattle on April 13 and 14 to talk about residential, commercial, and institutional products for indoor use.

Reaction to the Previous Stakeholder Meetings

Our first two stakeholder meetings were held in Washington, DC on October 9, 2003 and in Austin, TX on February 17, 2004. These meetings were excellent opportunities to learn about ideas, viewpoints, and concerns from a variety of stakeholder perspectives. In general, most stakeholder groups were supportive of the concept of an EPA labeling program for water-efficient products. Some of the notable points we took away from those meetings include:

- The program should be voluntary and national.
- Product performance and sustainability are key factors.
- Performance metrics should be developed early.

- Avoid confusing the marketplace or placing unreasonable demands on manufacturers or retailers.
- Purchasers, retailers, suppliers, manufacturers, utilities, and stakeholders in general, need more education about water-efficient products.
- More water-efficient technology research and development is needed.
- Develop complementary strategies as part of a comprehensive effort to promote water efficiency.
- Base the program name and logo on professional market research.

Our October meeting included panelists from the irrigation industry. Tom Kimmell from The Irrigation Association gave a good overview of what they are doing with water-efficient landscape irrigation products. Ron Wolfarth of the Rain Bird Corporation cautioned that new controller and sensor technologies are part of a system that must be designed, installed, and managed as such to achieve efficiency savings. He stated that, “It is possible (even likely) that Water Star irrigation products would simply waste water more efficiently if the management and expertise issue is not addressed.” And that may be a good segue into the first panel session of today’s meeting.

Closing

The panelists today represent a broad range of perspectives and experience to help us in our discussions. Participants will learn about water-efficient landscape irrigation products and their potential in the marketplace. The input we receive here, and in subsequent stakeholder meetings, will be invaluable as we shape our program. We cannot succeed without the help of all stakeholders so we will continue to build the program together with you. I want to thank you for coming and extend my wishes for a very productive meeting.

Scott Warner, our meeting facilitator will now outline the meeting approach.